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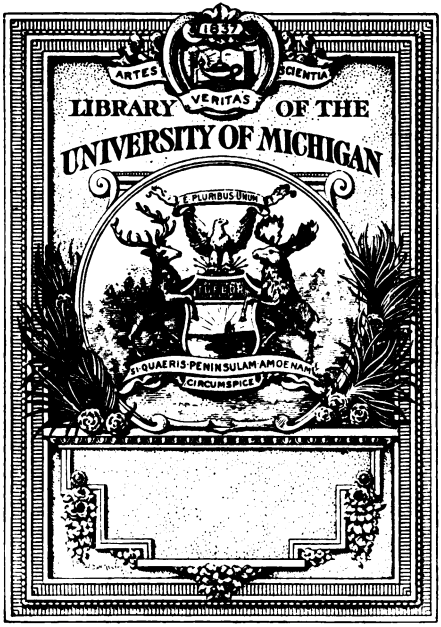
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THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

First Produced at the COURT THEATRE, on the 3rd of July, 1908, with incidental music by VINCENT THOMAS, under the stage direction of MISS EDITH RHYS and MR. WILLIAM POEL.

By the same Author

LAYS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

GWENEVERE: A LYRIC PLAY. Produced at the CORONET THEATRE in 1905.

THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

BY

ERNEST RHYS

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

1908

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
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CHARACTERS IN THE MASQUE [1]

PERCIVAL.
GAWAIN.
CLAMADOS.
LAUNCELOT.
GALAHAD.
} The Questing Knights.

ARTHUR. King of Britain.
GWENEVERE. His Queen.
KAY. His Seneschal.
A HERMIT.
A SAILOR.
PELLEAS. Castellan of Carbonek; known also as "Sir Fisherman."
NIMUË. The Lady of the Lake.
TIMOR MORTIS. Representing Death, or rather the Fear-of-Death.
TRADITION.
ARCH-DRUID.
DRUIDESS (CERIDWEN).

Druids, Druidesses, Knights, Pages, Ladies, Damsels of the Lake, Nuns, and Tradition's Child.

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[1] See Notes at the end of the Masque.

183985

THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

SCENE I

PROLOGUE

The SCENE *opens in a grove of oak trees, with a gray boulder in their midst. The lights are arranged to represent moonlight.*

A horn is blown thrice in the trees beyond, and then enter the Prologue, TRADITION, *as a young woman, leading a* CHILD *by the hand. She wears a long gray cloak over a green robe: the* CHILD *is in white and green, and carries a mistletoe branch.* TRADITION *mounts the stone, while the* CHILD *sits on its edge, and plucks the leaves from the branch one by one while she speaks.*

TRADITION

I am Tradition. If my cloak is gray
And winter-like, and stitched with memories,
My tree is green: [*Pointing to the* CHILD.

He brings the blesséd bough,
Fresh as the spring and new as nursery-tale.
To-night I tell you of a Mystery
The story of a Quest that shall not fail
Until the castle of the Grail be found:
I tell you of the cauldron and the spear,—
The first gave dead men life, the last did lap
The crimson life-blood up: both made me think
By night of that, the Sancgréal to come,
Whose Quest should beckon men into the waste,
Or bid them cross the sea, and never end
Until the towers of Sarras town appear.
That Cup, that Cauldron, and that sanguine Spear,
The Knights that quested, and their deathless dream,
All shall be painted on the dark to-night
And pass before you in our Mystery:
I am Tradition. Listen to my tale.

[*Harp plays, as* TRADITION *and the* CHILD *retire. Then again the Horn sounds thrice, and a file of white-robed* DRUIDS *advance from the grove of trees in silence. They take their positions, around the stone, and sing:*

DRUIDS' SONG

When we were made,
The tops of the birch,
The branch of the oak,
Covered our head.
Men, we were made
Of the fruit of fruits,
The fruit of the apple,
Oak-blossom and broom.
Enchanted by night,
In purple we slept
Before with the sun
Immortal we grew.

FIRST DRUID. Now, for the sun may never top the oaks,
To find our stone in place, our ring again!
Turn to the East, my Druids, pray the prayer.

THE PRAYER

God the Creator answer us
With the word of the Elements
When the trees utter voices
And the stones find a voice:

And grant us his Truth,
And with his Truth, Strength,
In the day of the flood,
In the day of the fire,
Now, and for ever,
God the Eternal!

SECOND DRUID. What sound was that—upon the open moor?

[*A sound of spears and shouts of men are heard.*

FIRST DRUID. If the Red Hand should come and strike—what then?
One circle broken, others, ring'd with light,
Shall form, and band against the under-world
And wait upon the Dawning Deity,
As we do now. I see a Ring of Men—
Of shining men in armour, vow'd to God;
Uncounted years away they sit and feast
Around a Table with a Cymric King,
And then stand up, to take the tireless Quest
Of that one Cup, that like Ceridwen's bowl,
Can give to hurt men healing, hungry, food,
To dead men life, in Isles of Apple-trees

Where sing the deathless birds, and will not cease
Calling pale mortals to felicity.

DRUIDS. The noise of spears grows nearer!

Increasing tumult, as the Druidess CERIDWEN *enters. She wears a white and saffron strait robe, and a golden torque.*

FIRST DRUID. Ceridwen! You should stand not here, but there,
Where men lie wounded in the tangled grass,
And moan for water and your healing herbs.

THE DRUIDESS. The battle moves this way: and I am come
To fire my cauldron here, and give back life
To stricken men, whose eyes are dash'd with blood,
Whom even now you hear, with ashen shaft
And rigid wheel splash red the Roman steel.
Light, light, the fire then: give my Cauldron flame.

[*The cauldron is hung on a tripod, over the fire that is lit beyond the circle.*

DRUIDESS'S SONG

I

Cauldron, now, and all the night,
Be thy brew of iron might
To re-redden blood of men,
And give life to death again.
Fire, fire, burn bright,
Till the sun-fire break the night.

II

My belt was a rainbow,
My veil was my hair,
As I moved to and fro,
Or sat robed in my chair.
Fire, fire, burn bright,
Till the sun-fire break the night.

Enter TRADITION

TRADITION. Put out your fire, this is the Roman hour.
I see them come, like rain-clouds on the hill:
Put out your fire, your Druids, fade away!
The sun you looked for shall outlive the dark,

When rust has eaten all the Roman steel:
And Heav'n shall send a Cup and healing draught
Of which your Bowl is but a forecast shade.
The Romans come that "Ave Caesar!" cry;
But when the Caesars are an ancient song,
The humblest cup, put to a hurt man's mouth,
Shall feed this legend that shall never die,
But bloom like Joseph's Thorn in Armathie.

SCENE II

A forest-side, with a hermitage, a hut built of wattle; a bell on a cross-tree at the door, on the edge of the coppice.

Enter PERCIVAL, *clad in rough deer-skin, and carrying a long rude spear, with a couple of wolf-hounds on a leash.*

PERCIVAL

WE are astray, good hounds; I never saw this hut, or this ramage of trees, to my knowledge. A shepherd should live here: but what should a shepherd do with a great bell?

[*He touches the bell with his spear; and a hermit in a long brown habit appears at the door.*

HERMIT. My soul, the greeting of Heaven to thee. What errand brings thee here?

PERCIVAL. Brown man, our road is lost. We are on our way, I and my tall hounds, to Camelot.

HERMIT. What would you do at Camelot, my son? Your tongue is rough as oakrind: there, the knights speak soft, and wear surcoats of fine samite over their steel vests and the King——

PERCIVAL. The High King? Him would I see, and the bright men in armour about him. Ay, for I would be a knight too.

HERMIT. I was one time a knight of Arthur's court; but these many winters I am bound to a solitary life, where there are sharper pangs than the spear's. My son, go not to Camelot, evil waits there. One only, of all the great ring of Knights, shall there be found pure and clean enow at the time of the Quest.

PERCIVAL. What Quest is that?

HERMIT. My son, have you not heard?—heard of the adventures perilous and marvellous, to be achieved by the one white Knight, maiden and peerless?—of the strange ship that lies by the sea of Collibë, beyond the realm of Logris, into which that Knight shall enter, and sail across it without wind or sail, or help of any mariner?—or of the Castle by the sea at Carbonek, where lies the old castellan, Pelleas, smitten by the Spear? or of the beams, whiter than sunlight, sliding

down the wall out of the very cleft of Heaven? Only one knight can achieve that Quest, of all the High King hath gotten about him.

PERCIVAL. One of those Knights, Father, I would be, and take the Quest on me, of the Ship, the Castle, and the Spear!

[*As he speaks, horns sound the Quest-call, and a flash of light is seen.*

PERCIVAL. Sweet father, that is no huntsman's recheat. The sound teases me, and pricks my soul like thorns. Darkness or no, we cannot stay. Point me now the way to Camelot.

HERMIT. I hear a horseman. Belike his road lies thither.

[*A horse's hoofs are heard, and a* KNIGHT *in armour rides through the next glade, the moon shining out and lighting his helm and shield.*

PERCIVAL. What noble shape rides there? Have you messengers from the Land of Summer?

HERMIT. Have you never seen a Knight, my son?

PERCIVAL. A Knight? a Knight you say? Oh, fair Spirit! Stay, Sir Knight! Are you for Camelot?

KNIGHT. I am bound—moon, stars, or sun, for

Camelot! To-morrow is the feast of Pentecost. The High King hath called us home!

PERCIVAL. Sire, take me with you!

KNIGHT. I cannot halt! Farewell, young forester! Father, farewell.

HERMIT. He will not halt, my soul! Stay then this night with me.

PERCIVAL. "I cannot halt"—those were his words. Nor can I! Hounds, we will follow him, and see at break of day—who knows?—the bright white walls of Camelot. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

[*Camelot:* KING ARTHUR *and* QUEEN GWENEVERE *holding high feast. The* King *and* Queen *sit on a dais, covered with crimson. The* Knights *form two lines on either side, and the* Dames *and* Damosels *are grouped in four groups in the foreground. A* Harper *sits immediately below the dais, playing the harp, whose strain is taken up at intervals by the other stringed instruments.*

Then a horn sounds; SIR GAWAIN *and* SIR KAY *leave the line of* Knights, *and return with* PERCIVAL, *still in his forester's dress, still holding his hounds in leash.*

K. ARTHUR

WHAT wild forester is here?

GAWAIN. My lord, a rough suitor enough of thy grace. He thinks to be made a Knight, at the asking.

K. ARTHUR. Young sir, a great knight is grown slow, root and branch, like a great oak! Can you use

that spear of thine at a fair tilt? Can you fight with a sword, as my men of iron and fire do, warring with the Black Pagans?

PERCIVAL. Great Prince, I have only fenced with a deer's horns and tilted at the wild boar with my spear!

K. ARTHUR. Here, young huntsman! Take this sword, and try a pass with my Seneschal, Sir Kay.

KAY. My lord, I fight with knights an it like you, not with the sons of the brake and kennel.

K. ARTHUR. Sir Gawain, then! if only to pass the time till supper.

[SIR GAWAIN *steps forth to meet him; they fight. At first* PERCIVAL *is pressed back; then he recovers ground, and strikes* GAWAIN *down.*

Loud shouts. GAWAIN *rises, and offers to renew the fight.*

K. ARTHUR. Enough, Sir Gawain. You took him too lightly.

GAWAIN. My lord, he hath a right arm like a deer's hind-leg. If he is lean, it is the leanness of steel. When he comes to his strength he will be peerless in his hour.

GWENEVERE. [*Aside.*] He is fair seeming, though his skin and his tongue be rough. [*To* PERCIVAL.] Young forester, who was thy father?

PERCIVAL. Evrawc was my father!

GWEN. Evrawc of the North—fine flower of the northern earth!

PERCIVAL. [*Kneeling to her.*] Truly, lady: he and none other.

GWEN. [*To* KING ARTHUR.] My lord, here is a pure drop of red blood. Make him a knight, I prithee.

SIR LAUNCELOT. He hath a high brow, sire—a stern eye! Grant this youth a seat at the great Table. Do as the Queen says: make him a knight!

K. ARTHUR. Give me my sword!

[*Flourish of horns:* PERCIVAL *kneels and is knighted. Then the ladies take him to one side of the hall, and do on his armour.*

K. ARTHUR. And now, what feast of magic, what portent, what song of jongleur's rhyme, what dance or sword-play, shall pass the time till supper? * * * Would Merlin were here, to make the air thick with battling ravens, or big with unseen creatures of the marsh and water-pits.

[*As he ends a dark figure appears in their midst, a* BROWN HERMIT.

K. ARTHUR. Ha, Merlin! art thou there?

HERMIT. Not Merlin, Lord, but a poor Hermit, once a Knight; who hath come to Camelot to call the Knights that serve thy Lord, to take on them the Quest of the Grail.

GWEN. Oh, mistimed man! brown-brother: why are ye come hither this day of our great happiness? Each knight hath true love, or true service, to bind him here: here lies his heart and his happiness. What quest needs be, but that which vows each one to serve his king, his queen, his lady sweet and gracious!

HERMIT. High Queen! The castle stands within a holy isle
Some say in Sarras, far across the sea,
Some say much nearer home, in Avalon:
Ringed all about with gleaming apple-trees,
That lift their crystal blossom up to heav'n:
The waters lie like shadow, and dark death
Sits like a falcon, brooding on its prey,
This side the isle: but white the city walls
Rise there, sun-white, beyond: and in one tower
There waits the timeless feast, there shines the Spear

That is the Spear of our Deliverance.
One Knight, one Knight alone, at last shall win
The Spear within the Tower!—that Knight is here,
[*Turning to the Knights.*
But which is he, only the Quest can show.
If one of you can cast a spear at death,
If one of you would prick mortality
With that bright Thorn that he of Armathy
Brought to this land—if one of you dare ride,
Leaving all else, to find that wall,
That Spear, that white and spiritual Place,
Then take the Quest upon you—ride this night,
For know to-morrow night may be too late.
And this I say, that I was sent to say.

[*Exit: while the horns sound the Grail call.* SIR GALAHAD *follows him. Great commotion succeeds, the* KING *and* QUEEN *descend and mix with the* KNIGHTS.

GWEN. Nay Knights—Sir Launcelot, Sir Gawain; what foolish thing is this? a hooded crow to call the war-eagles into the wilderness. Where lies this Sarras, he hath preached to us?—Oh Launcelot, what heaven is there for thee and me but Camelot?

[*Aside to* LAUNCELOT.

K. ARTHUR. Knights, peerless men! If you should leave us—go out—break the ring: where is the pact we had? The table will be bereft—a broken chess-board with its chessmen burnt! I will be king of dust and empty places. But here comes Galahad.

Enter GALAHAD. *The light shines on his face and helm, and his face shines with a brave radiance.*

K. ARTHUR. What news, Sir Galahad? You will not leave this hall of Camelot?

GALAHAD. High King, here life is sweet, like to the summer; and there the way is dark, winter-like, and hard: *But Knights, we needs must go!*

There lies the Forest of Shadows, and the Hold of Death of which Clamados of the Shadows hath told: *Yet Knights, we needs must go!*

There, in the Forest, or beyond, by the running sea of Collibë, there shall be seen the Shining Spear that brings death to him that sees. *But Knights, we needs must go!*

A Castle lies beyond; where lies an old forsaken Knight, spear-smitten—Sir Pelleas! He that achieves the Grail shall give his life for him. High King, the way is hard: *But Knights, we needs must go!*

K. ARTHUR. [*Going.*] Oh, Knights, great loss were this. I will be King of empty places. [*Exit.*

GALAHAD. Come, Gawain, Gareth, Percival, Clamados; come Melias, come great Sir Launcelot, the way, the way is hard: *But Knights, we needs must go!*

[*A great murmuring is heard in the hall; the* QUEEN, *and* Ladies, *and* Damosels, *strive to withhold the* Knights *from going. At length the murmurs take shape, and the women's voices chant:*

Stay, Knights! the way is dark,
The way is dark and hard,
Stay, Knights, in Camelot.
Refrain: CAMELOT.

[*To which the* Knights *reply from without.*

Oh King, we needs must go!
Oh Queen, farewell! Sarras! Avalon!
Refrain: AVALON.

[*As the scene ends the* QUEEN *swoons in the arms of her maidens. Then, enter* TRADITION *as before:*

TRADITION. Now, you have seen the sorrow of the King:
Who saw his House of Camelot unbuilt,

And you shall see the sorrows of the Knights
That took the Quest; shall see them tempted there,
In the mid-forest where pale Nimuë sits,
That cannot see beyond her witch's wheel
Of quivering fire: then, see them held at bay
By the black lance of Death and Deadly Sense,
And then sustained by the bright poiséd Spear.
Next see them fare, even to the Bridge of Dread,
To win the world with that old chivalry
That does not end its Quest, at fall of night—
But rides it out, and comes to morning light.

SCENE IV

The Forest of Shadows

Enter NIMUË, *who stands on a little mound, and sings:*

MERLIN, with his subtle craft,
Taught me sorrow when I laught,
Taught me laughter when I wept:
One I lost and one I kept:
Ask me which, of earth or heaven,
Merlin to my soul hath given?

Enter then the Questing Knights, *who pass by, one by one, in single file;* SIR PERCIVAL *is last of the train, and* NIMUË *steps forth from her hiding-place and seizes his bridle.*

PERCIVAL. Lady, what and who art thou? I am bound on a Quest into unknown lands, far beyond Logris! and cannot stay.

NIMUË. Yet wait a little. The covert is dark, the

way rough! Thy steed is a-weary. See, willingly would he halt!

PERCIVAL. But what or who art thou, maiden?

NIMUË. Nimuë, and I have things to say, that shall teach thee swifter ways to Paradise, than that those errant knights have ta'en. Listen to me:

[*She turns, and waves her hands, and a soft light breaks through the trees.*

See, the wood is dark beyond:
And the dark has Death in hand:
Here is light, that thro' the boughs
Weaves with wattle-bands my house!
There away, the dreadful hour
Of the night shall break thy power:
Sleet like fire shall fall on thee,
And the hail thy drum shall be:
When you reach the middle-heath,
Knight-at-arms, I rede your death.
Stay with me, and I will bring you
Wine and mead. Oh, I will sing you
Into Heav'n by ways unknown
Nearer far than Sarras town,
Or the Isle of Avalon.

[*As she intones these lines, she dances, and*

SIR PERCIVAL *remains awhile as in a trance: then he starts, and is about to urge his horse forward, when* NIMUË *calls aloud:*

Maidens, creatures of the lake,
Come and dance now, for his sake:
Bid him, with your ecstasy
Won of water and green-tree,
Stay with you and stay with me!

The Water-Maidens *appear and dance to swooning music which is broken by the triple horn and call of the Grail.* PERCIVAL *starts; and then the* Band of Knights, *led by* GALAHAD, *rides into the midst of the dance.*

GALAHAD. Come, Percival! what evil thing was here. We thought thee lost, man! You were a forester of old, and should lead us. The way is dark, the road rough.

[NIMUË *and her train and twinkling lights disappear.* GALAHAD *leads the* Knights *into the darkness.*

Another part of the Forest of Shadows

Enter GALAHAD, PERCIVAL, *and* Knights, *and halt in the darkness. Then a light appears, a swinging horn-lantern carried on a pole by a* Knight *who stays their further advance, and whose black armour is grotesquely barred with white. He represents Death, or the Fear- or Terror-of-Death*—"TIMOR MORTIS."

TIMOR. I am Fear's friend:
Not Death; more dark than he.
He gives sorrow end.
I am shadow, I am shame:
"Timor Mortis" is my name!
I have my kin,
Not Death's, more dark than he,
Whose night sees day begin.
And my lantern, it can show
Terrors day cannot know.

[*He turns his lantern, as he speaks, moving it slowly to and fro, and a Dance of Death, or Shadows, appears and moves slowly circling about him. The* Dancers

are dressed in black, with black swords and tunics, but wear livid white vizards. When the dance ends, they all drop to the ground, and the light being obscured, they become invisible.

Thereupon, the Knights *advance again upon their road, but* TIMOR, *starting again out of the darkness, threatens them. They all fight in turn, and, at the last,* GALAHAD *strikes down* TIMOR.

SCENE V

The Castle of Carbonek. The Castle stands on the rock of Carbonek—a ruinous sea-wall crossing the background, with the sea beyond. A rude flight of steps on the right ascends to a sombre door in a round arch. A ship's mast and white pennon, on the left, show the water-gate, where the ship lies moored.

Enter TRADITION, *with the* Child

TRADITION

BEFORE the last scene end our Mystery:
Before the Knights now reach the Water Gate,
To sail to Sarras—know, within that wall
Lie Age and Pain—old Pelleas, who lives
Yet hardly lives; who dies, yet cannot die—
Not till Youth enter, bringing him release.
And many Knights, great Questers of the Grail,
Have pass'd, to sail the sea: but none would stay.
For Youth 's a sailor, bound for far-off lands,
To win the Mystic Cup that lies at home.

Yet some must sail for it, and some must stay.
Now, come you Knights! the ship is at the quay,
The wind, the tide, require—why should you wait?
Know, if you do, upon that fatal stair,
The Knight that waits shall lose his hardihood;
Each step he mounts shall be a memory,
And Timor Mortis there shall cry him down.
But I have said enough: so, Knights, attend,
And play the Masque out to its fateful end.

[*Exit* TRADITION, *with the* Child.

Enter the knights: PERCIVAL, CLAMADOS, GAWAIN, GALAHAD

GAWAIN. There lies the ship, like a water-bird. The salt air smacks of far coasts; the wind blows free, that shall carry us long leagues before the Morning Star calls up the day.

PERCIVAL. Already at this sea-brink I breathe a different air. Come, Galahad, Clamados,—the first long reach of our quest is over. This is that very sea of Collibë.

CLAMADOS. But what grim Castle gate is there? We were to take ship, sirs, by the fair Castle wall of old Sir Pelleas, whose lands stretch from the verge of

Collibë to the march of Camelot. That broken gate should betoken no lord's great hall, no home of old Sir Pelleas, where hangs the fabled spear!

SAILORS. [*At the sea-gate.*] Yeave-o! Har-away! Har-away!

Enter SAILOR

GALAHAD. Sailor,—how is the tide?

SAILOR. At the top, my master. You are well-timed in your coming. We had thought you would miss this tide that has the wind to her back.

GALAHAD. But what castle is this?

SAILOR. Carbonek, my master.

GALAHAD. Carbonek? Not Sir Pelleas's Castle, renowned in the isles and lands?

SAILOR. The same, lord. Old Sir Pelleas, Sir Fisherman we call him, lies there sick to death. He does not swim. He cannot drown. He waits, they tell, that maid or man, who shall bring him out of his pangs,—one that, to save him, shall give up hope of Sarras, ay, or of heaven the other side of Sarras.

GALAHAD. Of Sarras? What do you mean, sailor? Do you say,—there is a knight should forsake his Quest for that, and not sail to Sarras, or across to blessed Arimathie?

SAILOR. Ay, ay, lord! So they do say. But who would stay by a poor moidered old man? Who would stay, that could bear a spear, sail the salt sea, and see the towers shine like red-gold there at the rare city?

GALAHAD. Is the city then so rare, so fair and so white a place?

SAILOR. Rare and fair, master? Fairer even than words can tell!

PERCIVAL. Hearken to that, Galahad! "Fairer than words can tell!" We waste time parleying. The tide waits, the wind blows clear. Come; let us all aboard!

GALAHAD. [*Looking toward the Castle gate.*] Sir Fisherman, he said, Sir Pelleas, lies there waiting his one deliverer.

CLAMADOS, GAWAIN. Come, Galahad! The ship waits.

PERCIVAL. Come, Galahad! Thou that art of greatest worship in all Arthur's realm. Behold you now, this is that very sea of Collibë; across it lies the city of Sarras! There, around those far-gleaming walls, shine the crystal-blossom'd trees; there bask the lawns and flowery meads of eternal youth. There, within the high Chamber, is borne, wrapt in red samite, the Sancgréal; the Three White Rays shine, and meat

and drink without stint are spread for them that achieve the Quest.

SAILOR. Come, lord; the sea waits for none. We must put to sea.

CLAMADOS, GAWAIN, PERCIVAL. Come, Galahad,—we go.

GALAHAD. [*Shaking them off.*] Dear fellowship, fair Knights!—I cannot. Get ye abroad. Farewell! I stay to free this stricken old man.

[*He goes towards the steps.*

PERCIVAL. [*Following him.*] Galahad! without you I am not knight enough for Sarras abroad nor Camelot at home. You have been our dear fellow-in-arms, our fellow in many a hard pass and black assay. Do not let us drive different ways now. It was you who led us to this wild water of Collibë; would you see us cross without you?

GAWAIN, CLAMADOS. Galahad! You are our dear brother-in-arms, and you, of us all, are the one Achiever of the Quest; you must not, you cannot, you shall not, leave us!

GALAHAD. I cannot; and yet I must. I shall not, yet I will. We said the way was hard. This is the hardest pass of all. [*Cry of* Sailors *heard without.*

GALAHAD. Hark! The sailors call you aboard. To sea, Sir Percival. To sea, Gawain, Gareth, Clamados. I hear another, fainter cry, that comes as it might be from under the earth. It comes from the Chamber of that Sick Lord the sailors call Sir Fisherman. I go to him. Good-bye!

[*He turns away; they seize his hand, but he drives them from him.*

SAILORS. To sea, to sea!

KNIGHTS. Oh, Galahad, the sailors call! We go, for go we must. Good-bye!

[*Exeunt to the ship. When they are gone* GALAHAD *goes and sits, as in despair, on the bottom step. The ship's mast and pennon are moved away.*

Then enter "TIMOR MORTIS," *at whose entrance,* GALAHAD *starts to his feet.* TIMOR *brushes past* GALAHAD, *and stands above him on the top stair, threatening him.*

GALAHAD. Ha, friend, what are you here to bid me do? I must enter.

TIMOR. Death waits there—more dread and sure, more dark and terrible than I. No joy, no light of day,

no rosy lips, within that sick man's vault. Call now, and bid the ship return! It is not too far on its way.

GALAHAD. Nay, Timor, let me pass. I know well what doom waits in that joyless door. I have given up Sarras for Sir Pelleas' sake.

TIMOR. Ha, but what of King Arthur, whose realm you, and Launcelot and Percival forsook, and left him to his dark doom? What of him, I say? And what of his disloyal queen, Gwenevere?

GALAHAD. Dark Knight, what of them?

TIMOR. For all the glory that was, look now and see!

[*The stage is darkened, and then, in the darkness, a train of* Six Men *bearing torches lead a bier, on which lies* ARTHUR, *death-pale, draped in purple, while a dead march sounds. To this succeeds the pageant of* GWENEVERE'S *going to Amesbury.* Six Nuns *lead the way, carrying tapers, dressed in white:* GWENEVERE, *in black garments, and more* White Nuns, *follow.*

TIMOR. Better follow them, Grail-seeker, to their doom than try to enter here.

[*A faint voice sounds within, crying,* "Galahad."

GALAHAD. [*Drawing his sword.*] Sir Pelleas, Sir Fisherman, calls me! Timor Mortis, let me pass!

[*They fight:* TIMOR *gives way, and* GALAHAD *pressing on, reaches the door and breaks in. Meanwhile the pageant of* ARTHUR *in the litter and* GWENEVERE *with her* White Nuns *returns and forms on either side the stage.*

Enter TRADITION *and* CHILD

CHILD. Many sail for it, few stay:
Many find it far away
In Sarras or in Ar'mathie:
Nearer home, it yet may be.

Some shall find it, at a breath,
Only in the act of death:
Some shall find, who shall not see
Avalon or Amesbury.

He who gives, to him is given!
It is true in Earth and Heaven,

In Carbonek, or on the sea:
It is true eternally.

TRADITION. All things wear surely to an end at last:
The sailing knights are gone: but he that stays,
Has found his Sarras by an old man's bed:
That thing he seemed to lose, that he hath won.
His hand has found the white shield on the wall.
His brows are bright. He has achieved the Grail.
I am Tradition: ended is the tale.

[*As* TRADITION *ends, the door of the Castle re-opens, and* GALAHAD *appears bearing the White Shield and Spear, that show he has achieved the Grail: and the* CURTAIN *falls to triumphant music.*

NOTES

THE present Masque follows the story of the Grail as it may be traced in the old Welsh and French romances, and as closely as the dramatic setting permits. It makes use, to begin with, of the allusions to Ceridwen and her cauldron in the old "Book of Taliesin," and in the later romantic tale of the same title now usually added to the "Mabinogion." Ceridwen, with all her wild associations, is the type of the supernatural creature of primitive British folklore that passes into romance; and her "Pair o' Awen" or cauldron of inspiration, is like that of Bran, the typical magic vessel which brings healing and supernatural powers to man in his mortal necessity. Here, and in what we can gather from the primitive Welsh religious poetry, we seem to have a foreshadowing of the legends of the Sancgreal, that grew up in the cells of the Middle Ages, bringing a diviner mystery to the idea and giving it its seal.

The Druidic songs, and the prayer, in the first scene, are based upon early poems in the "Book of Taliesin."

The first song, "When we were made," follows the lines beginning

> Pan ym digonat
> Am creu am Creat.
> [When I was made,
> By my Creator created.]

in the song of Kad Godeu, or the Battle of Godeu. The prayer is based upon other passages of the same highly imaginative song—one of the most impressive of these early poems in which the pagan and Christian beliefs cross, and whose full meaning and beauty have never yet been fully interpreted.

For the later scenes, their debt to the romances in which Peredur, the Welsh Percival, and Pwyll, the original Pelles or Pelleas, appear, or to Chrestien himself, will be clear to those who know the literature. To increase the dramatic weight of the legend, I have treated it so as to make the Quest the real cause of the breaking up of the charmed circle of Arthur's Knights at Camelot. And in the final scene the interest is made to turn on the action of Galahad: whether he will follow the Quest across the fabulous Sea of Collibë to share the glorious achievements of his fellow-questers on their pilgrimage to Sarras, "the Spiritual Place"; or whether he will stay at home, giving up youth and life itself for the sake of Pelleas, who lies stricken, the symbol of disease and old age, in the Castle of Carbonek? The final